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# and Soil Water Conservation NEWS

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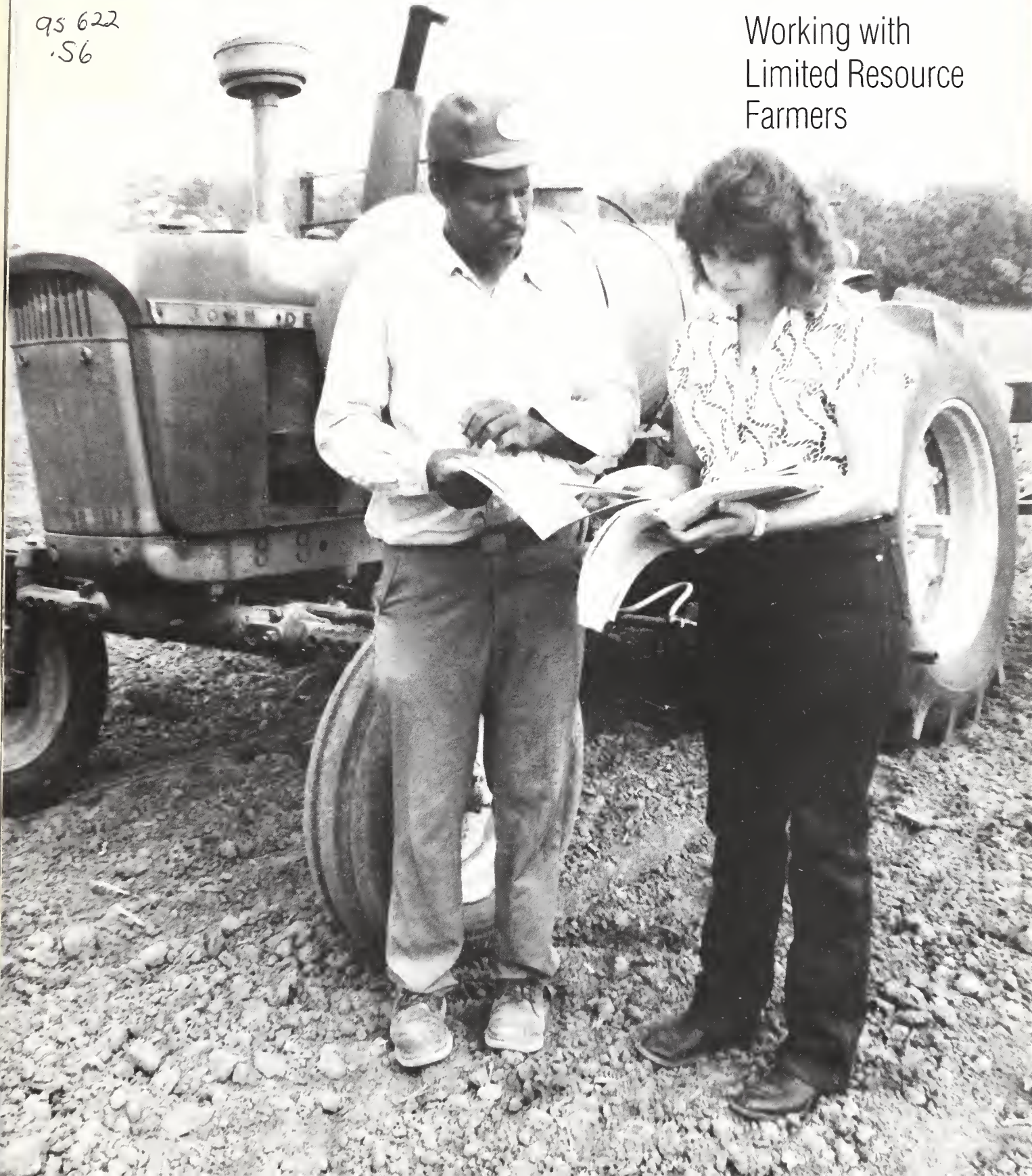
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Working with  
Limited Resource  
Farmers





**Cover:** Eugene Slater discusses conservation plan with Dorlene Hicks, then SCS soil conservationist in North Little Rock, Ark., and now district conservationist in Malvern, Ark. Slater grows mostly wheat on rental tracts totaling close to 250 acres. (Photo by Ron Nichols.)

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Secretary of Agriculture

**Wilson Scaling**  
Chief, Soil Conservation Service

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# Comments from the SCS Chief:

## Making the Most of Small Farm Resources

THE TRADITION of the American small farm is vital to this country. Some 72 percent of our farms and 30 percent of our farmland are in small-scale operations. The proud and independent people who run these farms bring diversity to agricultural production. They support their communities and contribute to our quality of life in ways that have no price tag.

Conserving soil and water is as important to a small farm as it is to a larger scale operation, and farmers have a wide choice of conservation systems to give them the flexibility they need. But, some of our neighbors on small farms work with very limited personal resources—education, equipment, capital, or labor. They need special direction and assistance in managing their soil, water, and other natural resources.

In partnership with the land-grant institutions and Tuskegee University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is providing that special attention. We're making sure that limited resource farmers understand their choices and responsibilities under the conservation provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill. We're on the lookout for new and affordable ideas that can benefit their operations. And, we're listening carefully to the producers themselves, realizing that every farmer, sophisticated or not, has experience to share.

Conservation districts have an important role in helping limited resource farmers. They can define local conservation problems of small-scale producers and include assistance to these folks in their annual and long-range plans.

Everyone in the conservation partnership can help ensure that our small farms, especially those with limited resources, remain a strong, vital part of American agriculture.

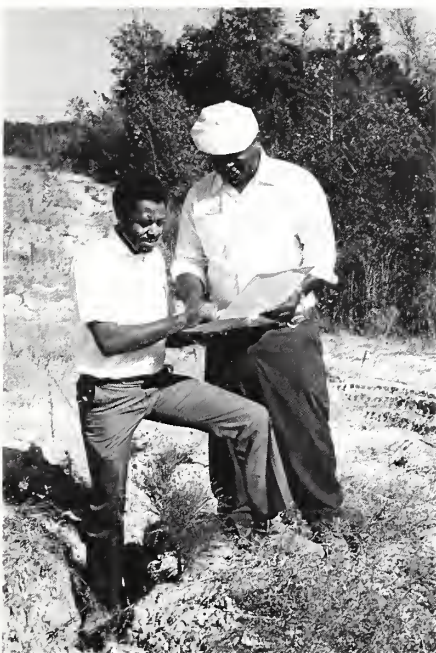


# Resourceful Farming

## Farmers Diversify and Profit

Below, at right, Oscar Stevens of Saluda County, S.C., who has a broiler chicken operation, says that small farmers need to raise animals to protect themselves against price changes in row crops.

Below, at left, SCS District Conservationist Zeke Powell, at left in photo, and Wilson Lewis, a farmer in Georgetown County, S.C., discuss conservation plan for Lewis' highly erodible land, which he is planting in trees under the Conservation Reserve Program.



**T**HE TIMES WHEN small farmers could grow only one or two staples, such as corn and wheat, are coming to an end. Small farmers are taking a serious look at what American business people have been forced to do in recent years—diversify.

Three small farmers in South Carolina have recently diversified their operations. They're making more money and better protecting their soil and water resources.

"Farmers who diversify can keep their heads above water," said Oscar Stevens, a farmer in Saluda County, S.C. "I believe you have to have animals to protect yourself against the price changes in row crops."

On his hilltop farm on the Saluda-Edgefield County line, Stevens raises broiler chickens, a few beef cattle, and a variety of row crops that complement his animal husbandry operation.

Five years ago, SCS District Conservationist Dan Guy helped Stevens develop a conservation system for his farm that included pasture improvement for his cattle operation and a grassed waterway to control soil erosion on his cropland. Stevens plans to begin strip-cropping his row crops this spring and eventually put in a pond.

Stevens is receiving Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP) cost sharing for installing the planned conservation practices through a long-term agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS).

When another farmer, Weston Legette in Marion County, S.C., received a letter from SCS telling him that he had highly erodible land, and in order to retain his USDA program benefits would need a conservation plan by the end of 1989, he was troubled. He wanted to protect the land he was





"At first, I thought planting trees was an odd way to make a profit, especially for a farmer," said Lewis. "Now, I'm sold on the idea. I've put 135 of my 140 open acres into loblolly pines under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)."

farming, but was afraid of a big expense. He went to SCS District Conservationist Lorenzo Henderson for advice.

Henderson worked with Legette on developing a conservation plan for his highly erodible land and helped him to apply for ACP cost-sharing assistance through ASCS.

Legette has planted his highly erodible land to grass and is using conservation tillage to control soil erosion. He has also diversified his operation, growing row crops and raising cows and hogs. Instead of selling his corn he is feeding it to his hogs. "With market prices what they are, I can run the corn through the hogs and make a better profit than I can selling it outright," he said.

Legette's conservation plan is helping him to protect his soil, maintain or improve his yields, and retain his eligibility for USDA program benefits.

Wilson Lewis, a Georgetown County, S.C., farmer, has diversified his operation, too. "At first, I thought planting trees was an odd way to make a profit, especially for a farmer," said Lewis. "Now, I'm sold on the idea. I've put 135 of my 140 open acres into loblolly pines under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)."

Lewis' farm is mostly sandy soil on 2 to 20 percent slopes. He was losing 10 to 25 tons of soil per acre per year. In addition to the soil loss, his pond was silting in, and the gullies in his cropland fields were tearing up his equipment.

His highly erodible land was subject to the conservation compliance provision of the Food Security Act of 1985. If he didn't have a conservation plan developed by December 31, 1989, he would lose any USDA program benefits he was receiving.

"When I first approached Mr. Lewis about complying with the

FSA provisions, he was skeptical," said Zeke Powell, SCS district conservationist in Georgetown County. One alternative was to put the highly erodible land into the CRP, which cost shares grass or trees planted on marginal cropland and pays the farmer an annual rental fee for keeping it in permanent cover for at least 10 years.

"It's tough for Mr. Lewis to give up farming a piece of land," said Powell. "Sometimes, though, it's the best thing to do." Said Lewis, "It was the best thing for the land. Now it will heal."

The Georgetown County Soil Conservation District named Lewis 1988 Conservation Reserve Program Farmer of the Year.

He's still a farmer—the crop is just taller.

**David Allen**, public affairs specialist, SCS, Columbia, S.C.



District Conservationist Lorenzo Henderson, at left, and Weston Legette, a farmer in Marion County, S.C., discuss Legette's conservation plan for his highly erodible land. In addition to applying conservation practices, Legette is diversifying his operation to keep it profitable.

The ACT Program is designed to show limited resource farmers how to improve the use of their land and increase its profitability by planting alternative crops.

## First ACT Demonstration Farm Chosen

**B**EN ANTHONY, SR., and his son, Ben, Jr., of Marianna, Ark., tried to supplement their income by planting and rotating 16 different types of vegetables on 6 acres of their 120-acre soybean farm. It didn't work.

During an onsite visit, Mark Habiger, Soil Conservation Service district conservationist, discovered that the field had poor drainage, an inadequate irrigation system, and an insufficient water supply.

He asked the family if they would be willing to volunteer for a new pilot program established in Arkansas for limited resource farmers: The Alternative Crop Technology (ACT) Program. They agreed and their farm was selected as the first demonstration farm under the 4-year program.

The ACT Program is designed to show limited resource farmers how to improve the use of their land and increase its profitability by planting alternative crops. Farmers receive assistance with irrigation, marketing, and management.

They are encouraged to use one or several conservation practices including conservation tillage, contour farming, grassed waterways, rotational grazing systems, winter cover crops, alternative crops, and fish production. Joe Williams, State resource conservationist, said each project is expected to cost \$10,000 or less, with each farmer contributing a maximum of 20 percent. The cost to each landowner will be determined on an individual basis.

Improvements on the Anthony farm will include leveling the

6-acre field and installing a well and 400 feet of main pipeline at a cost of \$7,200. Anthony's son feels confident the changes will make a difference in the financial success of the family's farm.

"I haven't really figured up what I made this year, but with this land leveling and all, this should double what I did last year," he said. "I think I can be more self-sufficient and won't have to worry so much. I wouldn't hesitate to recommend this program to anyone because I really do think it would help them. I know it's going to help me," he said.

The ACT Program is sponsored by the Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Cooperative Extension Service, East Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Council, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Arkansas Industrial Development Council, and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

Demonstration farms will be established in 16 other counties in the delta region that have a large number of limited resource farmers.

**Lee Brockway**, public affairs specialist intern, Little Rock, Ark.

When Tobbie Williams told Millben about his pond problems, he called on Nash at the Oklahoma City field office. He was sure the Williamses could get help there.

## Minister Refers Couple to SCS

**I**T'S NOT EVERYDAY that your minister advises you to "Go see the Soil Conservation Service." But that's what Reverend Michael Millben told Tobbie and Agnes Williams to do after vandals destroyed the pond on their 80-acre farm in Oklahoma County, Okla.

The pond was the only source of water for 30 head of cattle the Williamses raise to supplement their limited retirement income.

In 1971, while he was a student at Langston University in Guthrie, Okla., Millben had worked with SCS on a special low-income assistance program that provided cost sharing for conservation practices through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS). At that time, he had met an SCS soil conservationist named Cornell Nash.

When Tobbie Williams told Millben about his pond problems, he called on Nash at the Oklahoma City field office. He was sure the Williamses could get help there.

The SCS staff helped locate a suitable site for a new pond and

developed a design for it. The new pond was completed in September 1988 with 65-percent ASCS cost sharing. The Williamses have planted a temporary cover of wheat and rye on the pond dam and disturbed areas to protect them from erosion. They will be planted in Bermuda grass this spring. The pond will be stocked with fish provided by the State wildlife department at no charge.

"I love to fish and look forward to sitting by the pond on nice warm days," said Williams.

Local SCS District Conservationist Don Bartolina is also pleased with the new pond. "We are making a special effort to assist limited resource farmers like the Williamses," he said. "Many of them are just not aware of the assistance available from USDA, and we are seeking ways to keep them informed."

It helps to have a minister who knows about SCS.

**F. Dwain Phillips**, public affairs specialist, SCS, Stillwater, Okla.

At left, Tobbie Williams, who is blind, his wife Agnes, and Cornell Nash, SCS soil conservationist in Oklahoma City, Okla., discuss temporary cover of wheat and rye to be planted on earthen dam and disturbed areas at newly constructed pond. Bermuda grass will be planted this spring.





Bates urged others to use sound woodland management practices to protect the soil, water, and the environment to ensure a prosperous future.

## Eroded Farm Becomes Model Woodland

**P**ATIENCE AND GOOD management have helped me develop an eroded cotton farm into a continuously producing forest," said Virginia Bates, Louisiana's nominee for the 1987 awards program of the National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation. Bates, a forest landowner from Minden, La., became the State's fourth nominee to compete in the national awards program sponsored annually by the National Endowment and the DuPont Company.

With limited financial resources and labor, Bates overcame many obstacles in developing the model woodland enterprise. She succeeded in establishing excellent tree stands and maintaining profitability during the land use conversion. She received technical and financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and Soil Conservation Service and the Louisiana Office of Forestry.

A certified tree farmer with the American Forest Council, Bates practices a number of woodland conservation practices on her farm. Using timber stand improvement methods and selective thinning, the forest has become both productive and attractive. She has progressively planted all the farmland to loblolly pine. Wildlife flourish in the small woodland creek bottoms of the farm where hardwood trees are maintained to produce food and cover.

Bates spoke about her success as a forest land manager at a forest landowners conference held at Grambling University. She urged others to use sound woodland

management practices to protect the soil, water, and the environment to ensure a prosperous future.

The National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation, established in June 1982, is a not-for-profit, privately funded organization dedicated to conserving natural resources and fostering a sense of stewardship for the land.

**Herbert Bourque**, public affairs specialist, SCS, Alexandria, La.



Virginia Bates of Heflin, La., has turned 120 acres of eroded cotton land into a model woodland. Bates is a certified tree farmer with the American Forest Council.

"I was impressed with SCS employees' love of the land," Harris said. "The shared concern for natural resources is compatible with our native cultures."

## Native Americans Recruited From SIPI

**W**HEN THE SOIL Conservation Service in New Mexico recruited Vina Harris from the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque, a bonding happened.

"I was impressed with SCS employees' love of the land," she said. "The shared concern for natural resources is compatible with our native cultures."

Harris, a Sioux from South Dakota, was enrolled in the office occupations course at SIPI and is currently working in the Albuquerque office as a career-condi-

tional computer operator. She has plans to go on and become a computer analyst.

SIPI, founded in 1971, is the only technical-vocational school in the United States for Native Americans. It offers a 2-year curriculum in business courses such as accounting, data processing, marketing, and distribution and in occupational courses such as electronics technology, engineering technology, graphic arts, offset printing, and commercial food preparation. Approximately 1,000 representatives from many tribes attend the school from the Seminoles in Florida to the Yakimas in the State of Washington. SIPI is

Richard Ward says his work as a co-op student in SCS field offices has inspired him to seek a degree in resource management. (Photos by Jo Schilling.)





"My work at the SCS Gallup field office is challenging," said Tsosie. "In a short amount of time, I have realized how much must be done to prevent the Earth from completely eroding away."

funded by the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs.

SCS's first SIPI recruit was Amos Johnson, a Navajo from Gallup, N. Mex. Johnson began as a soil conservation technician co-op student in 1983. After graduating from SIPI, he decided to continue his education and pursue a professional career rather than a technical career. He is presently majoring in agricultural engineering at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, N. Mex.

Two stay-in-school students from SIPI are working at the SCS State office in Albuquerque.

Ernestine George, an Arizona Navajo, is a clerk-typist, and Stevanie Running Hawk, a New Mexico Laguna, is a receptionist. Both women have recently completed their program at SIPI.

Four students are working as co-op students in field offices around New Mexico: Bernice Tsosie, Shawndel Upshaw, and Priscilla Watchman, all New Mexico Navajos, and Richard Ward, a Sioux from South Dakota. Their work with SCS has expanded their horizons and most talk of going on to a university.

"My work at the SCS Gallup field office is challenging," said Tsosie. "In a short amount of time, I have

realized how much must be done to prevent the Earth from completely eroding away." Tsosie plans to pursue a degree in civil engineering at the University of New Mexico this fall.

"Working with farmers, ranchers, and the land is helping me make decisions about my future," said Ward. "I am considering enrolling at New Mexico State University to earn a degree in natural resource management."

**John B. Montoya**, personnel officer, SCS, Albuquerque, N. Mex.



SIPI Graduate Vina Harris is working as a computer operator in the SCS State office in Albuquerque, N. Mex. Harris plans to become a computer analyst.

Bernice Tsosie helps build a fence. Tsosie is working as a co-op student in SCS field offices and plans to earn a degree in civil engineering.



The study found that 23 percent of the farmers surveyed had never heard of a conservation plan. "In the short term," the study concluded, "this could be a major problem with regard to implementing the Food Security Act."

## Survey Shows Need for More Information

**C**ONCERNED that many limited resource farmers may lose farm program benefits, a committee of State conservationists has recommended that an outreach policy be developed to inform limited resource farmers of the assistance available from the Soil Conservation Service.

The committee made this and other recommendations after reviewing a study made by the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, on the impact of the conservation provisions of the Food Security Act (FSA) of 1985 on limited resource farmers. The FSA requires farmers to have a conservation plan by December 31, 1989, if they are to continue farming highly erodible cropland and receive program benefits from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The study, released February 1988, was based on face-to-face interviews with 1,390 farmers who farm 50 acres or less in Alabama, Florida, Maryland, North Carolina, and Texas. Farmers with household incomes of less than \$25,000 a year (82 percent of the farmers surveyed) were considered limited resource farmers.

Although conservation plans are provided free by SCS through local conservation districts, the study found only 25 percent of the

farmers surveyed had conservation plans. And, since nearly all (98 percent) of these plans were developed or last updated before 1982, few are thought to comply with the FSA because of new conservation plan application requirements or changes in land use and cropping patterns.

The study found that limited resource farmers are less likely than other farmers to have conservation plans, to request SCS assistance, to receive cost-sharing assistance, and to use structural conservation practices. It suggests that a lack of information, in addition to insufficient funds, may be a big factor in the reason limited resource farmers are not as active in applying conservation as other farmers.

The study found that 23 percent of the farmers surveyed had never heard of a conservation plan. "In the short term," the study concluded, "this could be a major problem with regard to implementing the FSA."

Only 5 percent of the limited resource farmers, many of whom farm marginal land, felt they have a severe erosion problem. Other studies have found that more than half of all farmers consider erosion a problem.

Of the farmers surveyed, 28 percent participate in one or more USDA programs, and presumably many of these farmers could be denied program benefits if they don't comply with the FSA. More than half of these farmers, however, said they were unfamiliar with the FSA.

The study confirmed that farmers value SCS information—particularly printed materials and visits

with agency personnel. It also found that significant numbers of limited resource farmers do not receive information from SCS.

Authors of the study recommended that SCS reinforce its educational and informational efforts of explaining USDA programs and services to limited resource farmers. The committee of State conservationists agreed and suggested—in its report to SCS National Headquarters—that all USDA agencies become involved in a special outreach program.

"The production from limited resource farmers may not add significantly to our total national food and fiber production," the committee wrote, "but definitely has an impact on rural development at the local level."

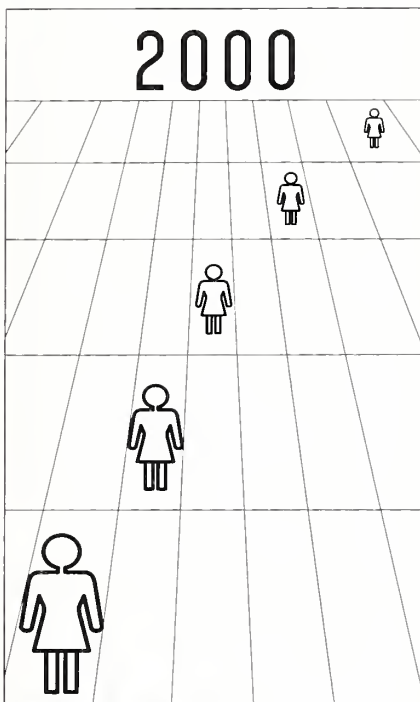
The committee urged that SCS offer more workshops in local communities to tell limited resource farmers how to identify highly erodible land and how to obtain USDA assistance to comply with the FSA. "The SCS field office staff should conduct workshops and guest lectures for elementary schools, high schools, community colleges, and 1890 land-grant universities (where applicable)."

To raise the consciousness of SCS personnel for the special concerns of limited resource farmers, the committee recommended that SCS use its award and evaluation system "to recognize and award those working with limited resource farmers in an exceptional manner."

**Paul Barker**, associate editor, *Soil and Water Conservation News* Washington, D.C.

Scaling said the private sector would be looking for the same highly skilled people needed for SCS jobs, and emphasized SCS was going to have to compete to attract and retain the best and the brightest.

## Workforce 2000 Conference Held



**W**ILL THE SOIL Conservation Service be ready to meet the needs of the workforce of the future?

Will the workforce be ready to meet the needs of SCS?

These challenges were issued by SCS Chief Wilson Scaling at a recent conference, "Toward Workforce 2000," held in Nevada, October 31 - November 3, 1988. Scaling told the approximately 500 SCS employees that even though

the focus of the conference was on the role of women, the goal of the conference was to recommend a management strategy that ensured a balanced workforce and equal employment opportunity in SCS for all employees.

"We're in a different world now," Scaling said. "What we have is a new generation of family issues not just women's issues. Mobility, spousal relocation, child and elder care are issues that affect women and men alike."

According to two studies prepared by the Hudson Institute, "Civil Service 2000" for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, and "Work Force 2000" for the U.S. Department of Labor, there are five major trends in the evolving Federal workforce:

- Service industries, like SCS, will create most of the new jobs;
- New positions will demand higher skill levels;
- The workforce will grow at a slower rate, and the number of young workers will decline;
- The average age of the workforce will rise as the baby boom ages; and
- More women, immigrants, and minorities will enter the workforce.

Scaling said the private sector would be looking for the same highly skilled people needed for SCS jobs, and emphasized SCS was going to have to compete to attract and retain the best and the brightest.

The conference was the largest ever for SCS and the first of its kind in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Scaling said it was being held because of a commit-

ment by top management to guarantee the best workforce possible as the 21st century approaches.

The main objective of the conference was to develop a strategic plan for SCS to meet the long-term needs of the evolving workforce. The plan will be incorporated into the Multi-Year Affirmative Employment Program Plan, in its final form. The plan will set forth ways to achieve a staffing balance, particularly with regard to women—the fastest growing part of the workforce.

By the turn of the century, if the studies are correct, women will make up about two-thirds of the newcomers to SCS. Scaling said a lot of the fresh, new talent will come from women, and experience will come from older employees.

The conference participants addressed issues such as improving recruitment, hiring, and retention of women. A management strategy is being developed with the help of Denise Doetzer, district conservationist in Virginia who will be detailed to Washington to work on a team of strategy planners.

"We have three choices with regard to meeting the challenges of our changing workforce," Scaling said. "We can lead, follow, or get out of the way. SCS is going to be a leader in equal employment opportunities and the best workplace possible for all employees as we go into the 21st century."

As the strategic plan is developed and finalized, *Soil and Water Conservation News* will report on various aspects of "Toward Workforce 2000" in future issues of the magazine.



## Model Cash Crops for Small Farmers

WESLEY KERR, U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service area resource conservationist in Lawrence County, Miss., developed a special show-and-tell project to assist limited resource farmers. The project demonstrated how additional income can be made on small family farms.

Kerr leased a 6-acre field for the project. He prepared a conservation plan for the plot, and then installed terraces and a grassed waterway to serve as an outlet. Curlex blankets made of seasoned aspen wood and photodegradable plastic mesh were used in the grassed waterway, making it possible for both structures to be installed in one application. Volunteer labor was provided by vocational agriculture students from McCullough Junior High School and by other young people in the area.

In 1986, Kerr planted jubilee watermelons, hot cayenne pepper, peanuts, southern peas, and 2 acres of hairy vetch. Total income from the project was \$1,350 per acre. In 1987, Kerr planted jubilee watermelons, sweet corn, and southern peas.

The crops were sold at roadside stands or to grocery store chains to pay for the lease.

Many of the limited resource farmers living in the county came to see and learn from the demonstration project, including the class of 20 vocational agriculture

students. Kerr credits the success of the project to good soil and seeds. Also important are knowing what crops are in demand and meeting that demand.

Kerr said that he believes that demonstration farms are an effective way of showing limited resource farmers the potential for additional income from cash crops and the benefits of proper management and conservation treatment on limited acres.

Kerr said, "We, as SCS employees, are charged with a responsibility to help limited resource farmers. We must become knowledgeable of the cash crops that are marketable in our locality and develop a well planned information program to help these farmers make the best use of their limited acres."

Becky T. McNair, public affairs specialist, SCS, Jackson, Miss.

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## Pilot Projects For Development

HOW CAN a limited resource community attract economic growth?

A new pilot project by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Alabama and Florida is designed to answer this question. By helping several limited resource rural communities in these two States to take advantage of existing development opportunities, USDA plans to develop materials and methods that will work for rural communities nationwide.

The project is a joint effort by USDA's Soil Conservation Service and Extension Service. Over a 3-year period, SCS will provide \$17,500 each to Alabama A&M University and Florida A&M University to conduct the project.

The universities, which were selected for their expertise and experience in working with leaders in low income counties in the South, will review economic development educational materials and programs in other States; develop new education materials on community development, needs assessment, leadership development, business retention and expansion, downtown revitalizations, and funding sources; test the educational materials in two communities with assistance of local Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils; and evaluate the effectiveness of the materials and workshops they develop. The new teaching materials—including a planned videotape—will then be used by local RC&D coordinators and Cooperative Extension Service agents throughout the Nation.

"We are most appreciative of the interest and concern for limited resource clientele by the Resource Conservation and Development Program," wrote James I. Dawson and Lawrence Carter, administrators of the 1890 Cooperative Extension Programs at Alabama A&M and Florida A&M, respectively, in a joint statement. "Hopefully, this project will serve as a model for future involvements with the 1890 Cooperative Extension Programs."

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# Louisiana Holds Meetings on FSA

U.S. DEPARTMENT of Agriculture (USDA) agencies in Louisiana are cooperating to reach small-scale, limited resource, and minority farmers with information on the conservation provisions of the Food Security Act (FSA) of 1985. One way the agencies are reaching limited resource farmers is through local group meetings.

About 200 farmers from an eight-parish area attended a USDA-sponsored meeting in June at Plaisance, La. Participating in the meeting were the Farmers Home Administration, Forest Service, Cooperative Extension Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, National Agricultural Statistics Service, and Soil Conservation Service. The St. Landry and Evangeline Soil and Water Conservation Districts; Southern University, the center for small farm research; and the Southern Development Foundation also participated.

Often, small-scale or limited resource farmers aren't aware of the conservation plan requirements under FSA. The meetings are one way to let them know what they need to do to continue receiving USDA program benefits.

The meetings serve as a forum to reach community leaders who are important sources of information among farmers with limited resources, who often don't sub-

scribe to popular farm publications. In addition to the meetings, fact sheets, radio and TV spots, and other media have been used to inform landowners of the provisions and benefits of the FSA.

**Herbert Bourque**, public affairs specialist, SCS, Alexandria, La.

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## Liaison Positions Established

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT of Agriculture (USDA) will soon staff a liaison position on each of the campuses of the 1890 land-grant institutions and Tuskegee University. The 17 agricultural liaisons will coordinate programs of mutual interest, provide guidance and teaching assistance, assist in curriculum development, recruit and counsel students on employment opportunities within USDA, and develop new ideas and approaches to reach small-scale, limited resource, and minority farmers.

Establishing the offices was recommended at a joint symposium between USDA and the institutions in April 1988 and subsequently approved by USDA agency heads. The positions were advertised under standard Federal personnel procedures and applications will be accepted through January 4, 1989.

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## Managing Limited Water

MANAGING A LIMITED water supply is a challenge to most farmers and ranchers. Raymond Yowell of the Te-Moak Indian Tribe in Lee, Nev., is no exception. Yowell's 200-acre ranch draws water from the south fork of the Humboldt River which often runs at a trickle in this arid land where precipitation averages 12 inches a year.

Since 1987 was so dry for Yowell and the 25 other ranchers that farm the 5,000 irrigated acres on the reservation, he decided not to take a chance on another drought. He called on Jim Evans, soil conservationist in the Soil Conservation Service Elko field office north of Lee, for a plan to install water conservation measures on his land.

The two men met at Yowell's ranch and surveyed a 28-acre field, mapping the areas that needed to be smoothed and leveled. Using his land plane and a tractor borrowed from a neighbor, Yowell finished the leveling in a few days. Next, they designed an irrigation system to fit the land. Yowell was careful to install a contour ditch system that would distribute the water evenly over the field. He dug five ditches 2 feet deep, and following the curve of the land, spaced them about 200 feet apart.

Yowell also installed a water control structure designed by Evans. The structure diverts water from the south fork of the Humboldt River into the main supply ditch, which then supplies each of the contour ditches. The

ditches are designed so that the water flows slowly enough to prevent cutting of the banks but with enough velocity to get the job done. The water now flows evenly over the field without ponding or washing away the topsoil.

Yowell has planted rye in the field which he will harvest for hay in the spring. The rye will protect the topsoil over the winter and provide a seedbed for planting alfalfa in the spring.

Yowell is active in Te-Moak tribal affairs and is a member of the Shoshone Sacred Lands Council. He is a part-time haying contractor, a member of the local grazing association, and a member of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service county committee.

Yowell is determined to make maximum use of his lean moisture resource with water conservation practices that will benefit him and the land for years to come.

**Leland Campsey**, district conservationist, SCS, Elko, Nev.

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## SCS Names Pacific Islands Director

THE SOIL CONSERVATION Service has recently named Joan Perry, former resource conservationist in the Guam field office, as the first director of its activities in the Pacific Basin. The Pacific Basin territory had been serviced by the SCS Hawaii State office since 1982.

Perry and her staff of seven are located in Guam. Their long-term goal is to expand conservation planning activities by hiring local islanders who speak the different dialects.

The territory covers the 14 Northern Mariana Islands, 183 square miles; Guam, 212 square miles; and 7 American Samoa Islands, 77 square miles. There are two conservation districts in Guam and three on the Northern Mariana Islands.

The soil and water problems faced by the region are erosion, flooding, lack of fresh water, typhoons, few livestock, insufficient food supply and rapid urban development.

SCS has completed an inventory of soil and water resources and has started planning PL-566 small watershed protection projects. One project, the Kagman Watershed on the Northern Mariana Islands, is a multi-purpose project that will provide watershed protection, flood prevention, and agricultural water management.

SCS has also agreed to accept and screen landowners' applications for Agricultural Conservation Program cost sharing provided by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

SCS is providing technical assistance to landowners throughout the region in constructing conservation practices.

**Kim M. Berry**, public affairs specialist intern, SCS, Washington, D.C.

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## Marketing Diversified Products

FOR MANY FARMERS, and especially limited resource farmers, dwindling markets and low prices have forced them to turn to alternatives to growing a single crop or raising just one kind of animal.

Many farmers are growing specialty fruits and vegetables in the same fields where they used to grow soybeans and corn. However, when the time comes to market these more specialized products, where do farmers turn for more information?

"The best source of information for farmers interested in doing their own marketing is their telephone directory" said Jim Rathwell, Extension Agricultural Economist at Clemson University. "Call up schools, hospitals, and restaurants directly and find out what they want. Many of these institutions want high-quality, low-volume products that many of the small farmers can include in their yearly planning."

Booker Whatley, retired professor emeritus of Tuskegee University in Alabama, advises farmers to run ads in the local paper and distribute flyers to various organizations in the area to advertise their products.

However, when farmers want to work with a middleman, where do they turn to find one? The "Red Book" published by Packer magazine is the best resource. It includes lists of growers, shippers,

and handlers along with credit references, measurement statistics, and locations of middlemen.

Most State Departments of Agriculture also have good sources of information on marketing. For example, many have copies of the "Red Book" as well as magazines from speciality industries such as the restaurant industry.

There are also many publications that deal with small farms and farming diversification including *Small Farmers Journal*, *The Mother Earth News*, and *The New Farm*. Addresses for these publications and others are also available through the State Departments of Agriculture or a local library.

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## Small Farm Agreement Signed

IN MAY 1988, the Soil Conservation Service and the Kentucky State University 1890 Land-Grant Cooperative Extension Program and Community Research Service signed an agreement to better serve limited resource farmers in Kentucky.

The agreement provides research and extension support from the Kentucky State Small Farm Program. Through the Small Farm Program, extension farm

assistants reach about 300 limited resource farm families annually in 10 Kentucky counties.

According to Dewayne Sharp, an assistant with the Small Farm Program in Logan County, "You get to know the farmers, their goals, and what they want to do. Then you can help them to use their farms' resources to reach those goals." Recently, Sharp helped one Logan County farmer develop a conservation plan for his highly erodible land. Using a combination of conservation practices, the farmer has controlled erosion and maintained profitability.

Farmers enroll in the program for an average of 5 years, during which they work closely with a small farm assistant. Farmers graduate from the program with a certificate and a better understanding of the government services available. On the average, farmers participating in the program have increased their annual gross income by \$10,000. In some cases, their net income doubled or tripled.

**Marion Simon**, State specialist for Small Farms and Part-time Farmers, Kentucky State University, Frankfort, Ky.

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## SWCS Conference Planned

"THE PROMISE: Low-Input Agriculture: A Search for Sustainability and Profitability" a conference designed around incorporating low-input agricultural

techniques into conventional farming systems will be held March 8-10, 1989 in Omaha, Nebr. The objective of the conference is how to incorporate profitable, environmentally sound agricultural production techniques into modern-day farming systems.

Several issues will be addressed including: public policy and educational aspects of low-input farming, impediments to adoption of sustainable farming techniques, and risks of adoption.

Low-input agriculture encompasses those production systems that attempt to reduce the use of off-farm purchased inputs; minimize adverse impacts of the farming system on the environment; improve or sustain the health of producers as well as citizens; and enhance profitability while sustaining the natural resources on which agriculture depends.

The conference is being sponsored by the Soil and Water Conservation Society in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and a number of agricultural and conservation organizations such as the Institute for Alternative Agriculture and the Rodale Institute.

For further information regarding this conference, contact The Soil and Water Conservation Society, 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road, Ankeny, IA 50021-9764, Telephone: 515-289-2331.

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## WEPP Goes to The Field

WATER EROSION Prediction Project (WEPP) field experiments are being conducted throughout the Nation to develop a soil erosion prediction method to replace the 25-year-old Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE). The implementation date for field use is 1992.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is taking the lead role in developing the prediction technology. The project includes developing a computer program for predicting soil erosion and conducting field experiments to provide data and relationships necessary to support the program.

USDA's Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service and the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management are developing an operational computer program (OCP) to tap the technology developed by ARS and make it usable by SCS personnel. Norman Miller, national hydraulic engineer in Washington, D.C., and project director, said that 20 to 25 SCS people have been selected to participate on the project. This Hillslope version of the project is planned to be completed by August 1989.

ARS has conducted research on a large number of sites over the United States on both rangeland and cropland. One of the cropland

experiments took place in Howard County, Md., in June. A rainfall simulator applied rainfall on a circle 50 feet in diameter at the rate of 2.5 inches per hour on tilled cropland soil. The plot contained numerous small plots for measurement of erosion caused by raindrops and by runoff. During the 3-hour testing period, varied combinations of water from the sprinkler to simulate rainfall and water added by hoses to simulate runoff were used.

A boom truck lifted two cameras over the experiment. The photo-

graphs will allow three-dimensional viewing of runoff and rill formation on the site. They will be analyzed to make hydraulic measurements during the experiment.

Better conservation planning, accurate equations, and the ability to apply to a broad range of soil and management conditions sums up the goals of both agencies for the WEPP model.

**Kim M. Berry**, public affairs specialist, SCS, Washington, D.C.

## Meetings:

<b>January</b>	8-12	American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Tex.
	18-22	North American Gamebird Association National Convention, Charleston, S.C.
	19-21	National Bargaining Conference, Honolulu, Hawaii
	30-Feb. 1	National Cattlemen's Association Annual Convention, Phoenix, Ariz.
	31-Feb. 1	Eastern Iowa Tillage Show, Cedar Rapids
<b>February</b>	5-9	43rd National Association of Conservation Districts Convention, Salt Lake City, Utah
	12-14	The Fertilizer Institute Annual Meeting, New Orleans, La.
	16-17	International Erosion Control Association, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
	19-24	1989 Society for Range Management Annual Meeting, Billings, Mont.
	21-25	Land Improvement Contractors of America's National Convention, Tulsa, Okla.
	25-26	Tenth Annual Ohio Organic Conference, Columbus, Ohio
<b>March</b>	16-19	National Wildlife Federation's 1989 Annual Meeting, Crystal City, Va.
	19-22	85th Annual Association of American Geographers Meeting, Baltimore, Md.
<b>April</b>	6-8	86th Conference of the Middle States Council for the Social Studies, Annapolis, Md.